

Glossary

Appropriation – An authorization granted by the City Council to make expenditures and to incur obligations for purposes specified in the Appropriation Ordinances. Three appropriation ordinances are adopted each year: 1) the operating funds ordinance, 2) the capital funds ordinance, and 3) the re-appropriated funds ordinance.

Arizona Highway User Revenue (AHUR) – Various gas tax and vehicle licensing fees imposed and collected by the state and shared with cities and towns. This revenue must be used for street or highway purposes.

Base Budget Allowances – Funding for ongoing expenditures for personnel, commodities, contractual services and replacement of existing equipment previously authorized. The base budget allowance provides funding to continue previously authorized services and programs.

Bonds – Debt instruments that require repayment of a specified principal amount on a certain date (maturity date), along with interest at a stated rate or according to a formula for determining the interest rate.

Bond Rating – An evaluation of a bond issuer's credit quality and perceived ability to pay the principal and interest on time and in full. Two agencies regularly review city bonds and generate bond ratings - Moody's Investors Service and Standard and Poor's Ratings Group.

Budget – A plan of financial operation for a specific time period (the City of Phoenix's adopted budget is for a fiscal year, July 1 - June 30). The budget contains the estimated expenditures needed to continue the City's operations for the fiscal year and revenues anticipated to finance them.

Capital Budget – See Capital Improvement Program

Capital Funds – Resources derived from issuance of bonds for specific purposes, related federal project grants and participation from other agencies used to finance capital expenditures.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – A plan for capital expenditures needed to maintain and expand the public infrastructure (for example, roads, sewers, water lines or parks). It projects these infrastructure needs for a set number of years and is updated annually to reflect the latest priorities, cost estimates or changing financial strategies. The first year of the adopted Capital Improvement Program becomes the Annual Capital Budget.

Capital Outlay – Items that cost more than \$5,000 and have a useful life of more than two years.

Carryover – Expenditure originally planned for in the current fiscal year, but because of delays, is postponed to the following fiscal year.

CDBG – See Community Development Block Grant

Central Service Cost Allocation – The method of distributing expenses for general staff and administrative overhead to the benefiting activity.

CIP – See Capital Improvement Program

City Improvement Fund – This fund represents the principal and interest payments on various non-general obligation bond debt instruments.

City Manager's Budget – A balanced budget presented to the City Council by the city manager (sometimes referred to as the preliminary budget) based upon an earlier Trial Budget, City Council and community feedback, and/or changing economic forecasts. Any City Council changes to the City Manager's Budget are incorporated into the final adopted budget.

Commodities – Consumable goods such as office supplies, repair and replacement parts, small tools and fuel, which are not of a capital nature.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Grant funds allocated by the federal government to the City of Phoenix to use for the prevention and removal of slum and blight, and to benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The City disburses these funds through an annual application process open to all nonprofit organizations and city departments.

Contingency – An appropriation of funds to cover unforeseen events that occur during the fiscal year, such as flood emergencies, federal mandates, shortfalls in revenue and similar eventualities. Also commonly referred to as "rainy day funds."

Contractual Services – Expenditures for services performed by firms, individuals or other city departments.

Council-Manager Form of Government – An organizational structure in which the Mayor and City Council appoint an independent city manager to be the chief operating officer of a local government. In practice, a City Council sets policies and the city manager is responsible for implementing those policies effectively and efficiently.


Court Awards Fund – Revenues provided by court awards of confiscated property under both the Federal and State Organized Crime Acts. These funds are used for additional law enforcement activities in the Police and Law departments.



Debt Service – Payment of principal and interest on an obligation resulting from the issuance of bonds.

Encumbrance – A reservation of funds to cover purchase orders, contracts or other funding commitments that are yet to be fulfilled. The budget basis of accounting considers an encumbrance to be the equivalent of an expenditure.

Enterprise Funds – Funds that are accounted for in a manner similar to a private business. Enterprise funds usually recover their costs (including depreciation) through user fees. The City has five such self-supporting funds: Aviation, Water, Wastewater, Golf and Solid Waste. In addition, the Civic Plaza fund, which is primarily supported by earmarked excise taxes, uses enterprise fund accounting to provide for the periodic determination of net income.



Estimate – The most recent prediction of current year revenue and expenditures. Estimates are based upon several months of actual expenditure and revenue information and are prepared to consider the impact of unanticipated costs or other economic changes.

Excise Tax Fund – This fund is used to account for tax revenues ultimately pledged to pay principal and interest on various debt obligations. This fund includes local sales taxes, state-shared sales taxes, state-shared income taxes and sales tax license fees.

Expenditures – Refers to current cash operating expenses and encumbrances.

Expenditure Limit – See State Expenditure Limit

Fire Neighborhood Protection Fund – This fund is the Fire portion of a voter-approved 0.1 percent sales tax increase approved by the voters in October 1993.

Fiscal Year – The City Charter designates July 1 to June 30 as Phoenix's fiscal year.

FTE – See Full-Time Equivalent Position

Full-Time Equivalent Position (FTE) – A position converted to the decimal equivalent of a full-time position based on 2,080 hours per year. For example, a part-time clerk working for 20 hours per week would be equivalent to one-half of a full-time position or 0.5 FTE.

Fund – An independent governmental accounting entity with a self-balancing group of accounts including assets, liabilities and fund balance, which record all financial transactions for specific activities of government functions.

Fund Balance – As used in the budget, the excess of resources over expenditures. The beginning fund balance is the residual funds brought forward from the previous fiscal year.

GAAP – See Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

General Obligation Bonds (G.O. Bonds) – Bonds that require voter approval and finance a variety of public capital projects such as streets, buildings, parks and improvements. The bonds are backed by the "full faith and credit" of the issuing government.

General Purpose Funds (GPF or General Fund) – Resources derived from taxes and fees that have unrestricted use, meaning they are not earmarked for specific purposes.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) – Uniform minimum standards of financial accounting and reporting that govern the form and content of basic financial statements. A general description of the differences between GAAP and the City's budgetary basis is described in the General Budget and Financial Policies section. The City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report reconciles Phoenix's budget basis of accounting to a GAAP basis.

GFOA – Government Finance Officers Association

Goal – A statement of broad direction, purpose or intent based on the needs of the community. A goal is general and timeless; that is, it is not concerned with a specific achievement in a given time period.

G. O. Bonds – See General Obligation Bonds

GPF – See General Purpose Funds

Grant – A contribution by one government unit or funding source to another. The contribution is usually made to aid in the support of a specified function (e.g., library materials or drug enforcement, but it is sometimes for general purposes).

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Infrastructure – Facilities that support the daily life and growth of the City, for example, roads, water lines, sewers, public buildings, parks and airports.

Impact Development Fees – Fees adopted by the City Council in 1987 requiring new development in the City's outlying planning areas to pay its proportional share of the costs associated with providing necessary public infrastructure.

Improvement Districts – Special assessment districts formed by property owners who desire and are willing to pay for mutually enjoyed improvements such as streets, sidewalks, sewers and lighting.

In-Lieu Property Taxes – An amount charged to certain city enterprise and federally-funded operations that equals the city property taxes that would be due on plant and equipment if these operations were for-profit companies. This includes the Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste and Public Housing funds.

Levy – See Tax Levy

Mandate – Legislation passed by the state or federal government requiring action or provision of services and/or programs. Examples include the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires actions such as physical facility improvements and provision of specialized transportation services.

MBE/WBE – Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise

Net Direct Debt Ratio – The ratio between property tax-supported debt service and secondary assessed valuation. The Net Direct Debt Ratio is one way to gauge the ability of a local property tax base to support general obligation debt service.

Objective – A desired output-oriented accomplishment that can be measured and achieved within a given time frame, and advances the activity and organization toward a corresponding goal.

Operating Funds – Resources derived from continuing revenue sources used to finance ongoing operating expenditures and pay-as-you-go capital projects.

Ordinance – A formal legislative enactment by the City Council. If it is not in conflict with any higher form of law, such as a state statute or constitutional provision, it has the full force and effect of law within the boundaries of the city.

Outstanding Bonds – Bonds not yet retired through principal and interest payments.

Parks and Preserves Fund – This fund is used to account for the funds generated by the 0.1 percent increase in the sales tax approved by voters in 1999. The funds are to be used for the purchase of state trust lands for the Sonoran Desert Preserve Open Space, and the development of regional and neighborhood parks to enhance community safety and recreation.

Pay-As-You-Go Capital Projects –

Capital projects whose funding comes from day-to-day city operating revenue sources.

Percent-for-Art – An ordinance that allocates up to 1 percent of the City's Capital Improvement Budget to fund public art projects.

Personal Services – All costs related to compensating City employees including employee benefits costs such as contributions for retirement, social security, and health and industrial insurance. It also includes fees paid to elected officials, jurors, and election judges and clerks. It does not include fees for professional or other services.

Plan Six Agreements – Agreements to provide funding to accelerate the construction of the Waddell and Cliff dams, and modification of the Roosevelt and Stewart dams, for the benefit of the city of Phoenix. These benefits include the use of additional unappropriated water, controlling floods, improving the safety of existing dams, and providing new and improved recreational facilities.

PLT – See Privilege License Tax

Police Neighborhood Protection Fund –

This fund is the police portion of a voter-approved 0.1 percent sales tax increase approved by the voters in October 1993.

Primary Property Tax – A limited tax levy that can be used to support any public expense. By Council policy, the primary property tax revenues are restricted to the prior year's amount plus an amount attributed to new construction.

Privilege License Tax (PLT) – The City of Phoenix's local sales tax, made up of more than 14 general categories.

Privilege License Tax Fees – Includes fees charged for Privilege License Tax (PLT) Licenses and the annual fee per apartment unit on the rental of non-transient lodging. Fees recover the costs associated with administering an efficient and equitable system. A PLT license allows the licensee the privilege to conduct taxable business activities and to collect and remit those taxes.

Program – A group of related activities performed by one or more organizational units.

Property Tax – A levy upon each \$100 of assessed valuation of property within the city of Phoenix. Arizona has two types of property taxes. Primary property taxes support the City's general fund, and secondary property taxes pay general obligation debt.

Reappropriated Funds – Funds for contracts entered in a previous fiscal year but which are still in progress.

Recoveries – Canceled prior year encumbrances.

RPTA – Regional Public Transportation Authority.


Resources – Total amounts available for appropriation including estimated revenues, fund transfers and beginning fund balances.

Restricted Funds – See Special Revenue Fund.

Salary Savings – Budget savings realized through normal employee turnover.


Secondary Property Tax – A tax levy restricted to the payment of debt service on bonded debt. The secondary property tax when combined with the primary property tax levy produces a total rate of \$1.82 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Self-Insurance – Self-funding of insurance losses. With the exception of airport operations, police aircraft operations, and excess general and automobile liability for losses in excess of \$5 million, the City is self-insured for general and automobile liability exposures.



Special Revenue Fund – A fund used to account for receipts from revenue sources that have been earmarked for specific activities and related expenditures. Examples include Arizona Highway User Revenue funds, which must be used for street and highway purposes, and secondary property tax, which is restricted to general bonded debt obligations.

Sports Facilities Fund – A special revenue fund established to account for revenue raised from a designated portion of the hotel/motel tax and tax on short-term motor vehicle rentals. These funds pay the City's portion of the debt service and other expenditures related to the downtown sports arena.



State Expenditure Limit – A limitation on annual expenditures imposed by the Arizona Constitution as approved by the voters in 1980. The limitation is based upon a city's actual 1979-80 expenditures adjusted for interim growth in population and inflation. Certain expenditures are exempt by the state Constitution. Other expenditures can be exempted with voter approval.

State-Shared Revenues – Revenues levied and collected by the state but shared with local governments as determined by state government each year. In Arizona, a portion of the state's sales, income and vehicle license tax revenues are distributed on the basis of a city's relative population percentage.

Supplemental – Resources to provide new or enhanced programs or services over the base budget allocation.

Tax Levy – The total amount to be raised by general property taxes for purposes specified in the Tax Levy Ordinance.

Technical Review – A detailed line-item review of each City department's budget conducted by the Budget and Research Department.

Transit 2000 Fund – This fund is used to account for the 0.4 percent sales tax dedicated to transit approved by voters on March 14, 2000. Also included in this fund are fare box collections and DASH revenues.

Trial Budget – A budget developed in early spring that presents a proposed balanced budget for discussion by the City Council and the community before the city manager submits his or her Preliminary Budget in late spring.

Truth in Taxation – A state law requiring cities and towns that propose a primary property tax levy yielding an amount greater than the previous year, excluding amounts attributable to new construction, to publish a notice in the newspaper and hold a public meeting concerning the proposed increase.

User Fees or User Charges – A fee paid for a public service or use of a public facility by the individual or organization benefiting from the service.

Zero Base Budgeting – A process for allocating financial resources that provides for the comparison and prioritization of existing and proposed programs and services. The process includes organizing expenditures in individual decision packages and priority ranking all decision packages.